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Indiana. In the Indiana counties he finds that about one-third of the total combined population is unchurched. More details are given regarding the township in Pennsylvania. Here there are fourteen congregations representing ten denominations worshipping in ten churches; \$30,000 is invested in church property, \$4,180 is raised by the churches yearly, \$500 is sent into the township annually by denominational home-mission boards; the combined membership is 405, or about 36 per cent of the population of the township; the average church membership is 29; each member contributes \$10.07 a year; the average Sunday morning attendance per church is 40; none of the ten ministers receives more than \$750 per year; one minister has a regular college and theological training, and seven have little more than a high-school education.

These figures, contends the writer, show that the church is at present ministering to only a part of the people, and that it is doing that ministering poorly. It is making no effort to meet the social and educational need. This failure to do its duty is due to inefficient ministers and to over-churching. The minister ought to be better trained. "He should," says Mr. Odell, "know something of the regeneration of the soil as well as of the soul." By the coalescing of a number of local churches the resulting congregation will be enabled to maintain a plant which will draw the entire community to it and which will enable it to furnish a worthy expression of its life.

Another writer, Rev. Charles King, Louisiana, Mo., has recently expressed himself in print on the question of the country church and what it must do to meet its problem. His opinions are contained in a booklet entitled *The Rural Church Problem*. The volume is a series of addresses delivered in August, 1912, before the Missouri Baptist Assembly, Arcadia Heights, near Ironton. The chapter headings are as follows: "An Introductory Chapter," "Rural Church Conditions," "Rural Church Experts," "The Rural Ministry, and Rural Evangelism," "The Rural Church Program," and "A Final Chapter." A brief bibliography is given on the last page.

In the chapter on "The Rural Church Program" the author mentions some of the things which in his opinion the country church must do to meet the situation confronting it. It must "fear God," get a "vision of service," have "frequent gatherings," instil a more compelling "recognition of stewardship" among the people, attend to "indoctrination," support "good Bible schools," have frequent "testimony meetings," find the best "local leaders" possible, cultivate "those people living on the margin of its territory," and radiate "cordiality and hospitality." Among contributing remedies are mentioned the encouragement of better living, adequate equipment, women's meetings, singing schools, good roads, and social and recreational gatherings.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Federated Theological Seminaries

The *Independent*, commenting editorially in its issue of October 31 on the recent union of the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational theological faculties affiliated with McGill University, compliments the Canadian churches on being in advance of those in the United States in this "first union of seminaries," as the

"proposed union of those about San Francisco hangs fire." The writer seems to think the spirit of union in the United States is not yet fully developed, and cites as an example of this opinion a quotation from the inaugural address of Dr. Tipple, the new president of Drew Theological Seminary. Dr. Tipple is represented as saying: "Most theological seminaries are

denominational, and ought to be." Continuing, the editorial says: "We still have professors of 'polemic theology.' But we also have a federation of churches, and why not of seminaries, as in Canada and China?" Perhaps one reason is because we have such noble interdenominational schools as Andover, Chicago, Harvard, Hartford, Oberlin, Union, and Yale.

The Methodist Church and Its Sunday-School Lessons

We quote from an editorial published in the November number of the *Sunday School Journal*, which is well known as the chief Sunday-school organ of the Methodist denomination:

By action of the last General Conference, the supervision of all lesson courses for use in the Sunday schools of the Methodist Episcopal Church, including courses in teacher training, was committed to the Board of Sunday Schools. The Editor, as one of the two co-ordinate executive officers of the Board, is charged with the special responsibility of presiding over the preparation of these courses. With a view to this work, the Board, at its last meeting, appointed a special Committee on Curriculum, consisting of the following members: Professor Norman E. Richardson, chairman; Bishop William F. Anderson, Professor Charles M. Stuart, Professor William J. Thompson, Professor Lindsay B. Longacre, Dr. Francis M. Larkin, Mr. Frank L. Brown.

The editorial goes on to state that the committee is authorized to engage the services of other experts, that the work of the committee must be submitted to the board for approval, but that when approved such courses will be official.

This movement is so significant that it should not escape the notice of the public. It is the first instance of one of the great denominations providing for itself the machinery for the preparation of its own courses of study for the Sunday school. It is not our province to prophesy, but the step which has been taken by the Methodist

denomination indicates that at least each of the large denominations may venture to assert its right to direct the educational work of its own churches, and to exercise that right in the preparation of actual courses of study.

In case these large denominations should sever their connection with, and terminate their dependence upon, the International Sunday School Association in its relation to lesson courses, there is a grave difficulty confronting the smaller denominations, to whom the expense of publishing independent courses would be an effectual barrier. Will the future show the smaller denominations lining up each with the larger body which comes nearest to its distinctive doctrines, in the use of joint publications, or will there still remain a necessity for an International lesson committee to render the service required for these many smaller groups of Sunday schools? To quote again from the *Sunday School Journal*:

The outcome of the whole matter is that each denomination must feel free to go on its own way. If any church is satisfied to adopt and use the lesson courses prepared by the International Association, let it do so; if another can take the International courses and modify them and build upon them according to its needs, it should have the privilege; if limited groups of denominations, being in closer sympathy and agreement, think best to come together and prepare courses measurably adapted to their common needs, they must be permitted to do so without prejudice; and if any denomination prefers to proceed in entire independence and frame courses which it thinks best adapted to its own ends, it must have unlimited license to do so without criticism. Only in this way, we believe, can the best interests of progress be served.

May we not look forward to a halcyon time when not even a denomination may override the intelligent opinion of local educators and the peculiar necessities of a local church, in such a way as to prevent their selection for the school in question,

such courses as seem best adapted to the needs of the school, regardless of the publishing house from which these courses come?

The College and the Sunday School

At the recent state Sunday-school convention in Wisconsin, one of the most significant meetings was the college conference. Wisconsin is a state of small colleges and of widespread educational spirit. The fact that 75 per cent of her population is foreign—either Catholic or German-speaking Lutheran—and that these churches provide for the majority of her working classes, leaves a residuum of people who are intelligent, progressive, and sufficiently few in numbers to be somewhat easily handled. The organized Sunday-school work of the state, therefore, is in the hands of college graduates, who naturally turn to the educational institutions of the state for co-operation and suggestions. Questions discussed at this conference were: What can the colleges of Wisconsin do to raise the standard of religious education in the churches throughout the state? Can they offer courses which will prepare their students for Sunday-school teaching after graduation? Can they, by organizing cadet corps of teachers from the colleges for the churches of the towns where these colleges are located, give at least for a temporary period trained workers for these schools?

Religious Education in Australian Public Schools

In four of the six states of Australasia there has been worked out a system of religious instruction in the schools. This has been so successful that it may give help to Americans. As described by Canon Garland:

It provides for simple selected Bible lessons being given by the state school teachers without

sectarian teaching, and for ministers of religion or their accredited substitutes visiting the schools during school hours and teaching the children of their respective denominations. A conscience clause provides that no child shall receive either the Bible lessons from the state school teacher or religious institution from the minister of religion, contrary to the parent's wish. This conscience clause is the key to the whole problem because it gives perfect liberty to the parent, placing the full control in their hands. Neither the state nor the minister of religion can compel the child to receive the religious lessons. This system has existed in New South Wales since 1866, in Tasmania since 1868, Western Australia since 1893, and Norfolk Island since 1906, and it was introduced into Queensland in 1910 by the decision of the people ascertained through a referendum.

The official opinions of the heads of the department where this system exists are emphatic that no sectarian difficulties arise in connection with the working of the religious instruction clauses and these official opinions are indorsed by the state school teachers who have in great numbers testified in writing their high appreciation of the value of the religious instruction given in the state schools. The system is further indorsed by the action of those churches—Anglican, Presbyterian, and Methodist—and of the Salvation Army, all of which have unanimously through their highest governing bodies given their adherence to the system, and commend its introduction where it does not exist.

The Roman Catholic Church is opposed to the system, but notwithstanding that opposition, in New South Wales alone the number of Roman Catholic children attending the state schools is over 30,000, practically all of whom accept the selected Bible lessons from their state school teachers, and this notwithstanding the opposition of their church to the national system of education. Once the system is introduced it proves the strongest bulwark for the maintenance of a national system of education as opposed to denominational education under ecclesiastical control.